

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

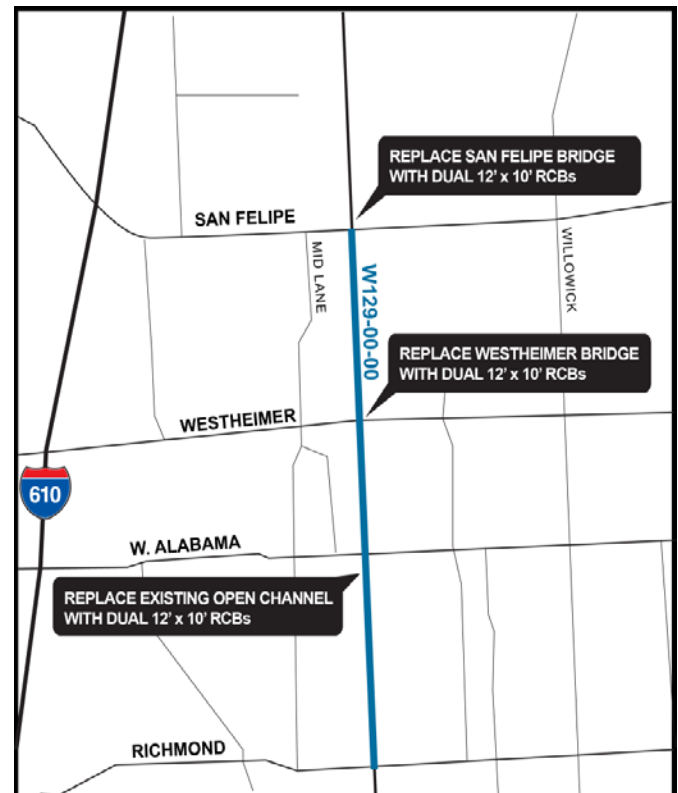
August 15, 2011

HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT PROJECT TO IMPROVE DRAINAGE DITCH IN THE GALLERIA AREA INSIDE WEST LOOP 610

Project Includes the Reconstruction of Westheimer and San Felipe Bridges

On Aug. 15, the Harris County Flood Control District began a \$13.2 million capital improvement project to rebuild and enclose a poorly-functioning drainage ditch and greatly improve the flow of stormwater in the Galleria area. The project spans from San Felipe Street to Richmond Avenue on the drainage ditch, which runs adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks just inside West Loop 610. The drainage ditch is formally identified by the Flood Control District as W129-00-00. (See adjacent map.)

The project includes the demolition and replacement of 50-year-old bridges that cross the drainage ditch at Westheimer Road and at San Felipe. It is not yet known when work on the Westheimer and San Felipe bridges will begin; however, the Flood Control District will announce the construction schedule when it becomes available. The bridge replacement projects will require traffic flow on the Westheimer bridge to be limited to one lane in each direction for up to a month, and all lanes on the San Felipe bridge to be closed for up to two weeks. The bridges will not be replaced at the same time. The Flood Control District will establish detour routes that will aid in the flow of traffic during the bridge projects. The City of Houston is contributing funds to the bridge projects.



Construction on the drainage ditch itself began on Aug. 15. The Flood Control District is rebuilding and enclosing the drainage ditch in dual 12-foot by 10-foot reinforced concrete boxes. The Flood Control District is committed to communicating information about the project to affected individuals and organizations so that citizens can make informed decisions to minimize inconvenience during construction.

In anticipation of the bridge closures, Flood Control District officials are meeting with local homeowners and civic associations, churches, schools, businesses, and transportation and emergency services providers to provide information about traffic detour plans and to answer questions. The District also will distribute traffic detour information to the media (Internet, print, radio and television) on an on-going basis.

For more information on the W129-00-00 project and the opportunity to sign up to receive regular email updates, please visit the W129-00-00 project webpage at www.hcfd.org/W129, or call the Project Hotline, which is monitored daily, at 713-684-4040.

ABOUT THE W129-00-00 DRAINAGE DITCH

The W129-00-00 drainage ditch flows northward from Westpark Drive inside of West Loop 610 and runs parallel to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. It drains into Buffalo Bayou on the southern edge of the City of Houston's Memorial Park. Along its approximately 2-mile route, W129-00-00 crosses under U.S. 59, Richmond Avenue, Westheimer Road and San Felipe Street, which all carry heavy loads of traffic between the Galleria area and downtown Houston. The drainage ditch is bordered by concentrated areas of residential and commercial development.

The Flood Control District has been maintaining the drainage ditch since the mid-1950s. The drainage ditch has exceeded its design life, and over time the slopes of W129-00-00 have experienced concrete failures and erosion. The right of way for the drainage ditch is restricted to a narrow 35-foot area, and that property is owned by Union Pacific Railroad and CenterPoint Energy.

The Flood Control District recognized the need for repairs and launched a three-phase reconstruction project in 2004. The first phase of the project consisted of replacing eroded sections of W129-00-00 between San Felipe and Buffalo Bayou. This \$9.4 million project enclosed the drainage ditch with dual 12-foot by 10-foot reinforced concrete boxes and was completed in 2006.

The second phase began on Aug. 15 and focuses on the section of the drainage ditch from San Felipe to Richmond. The third phase will consist of similar work from Richmond to Westpark Drive. Final Design of the third phase is set to start in mid-to-late 2011, although construction has not yet been funded. When all three phases are complete, the structural integrity of the drainage infrastructure will be greatly improved, reducing the risk of flooding to surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas.

ABOUT THE HARRIS COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT

The Harris County Flood Control District builds projects that reduce flooding risks and damages from bayous and creeks, with appropriate regard for community and natural values. With more than 1,500 bayous and creeks totaling approximately 2,500 miles in length, the Flood Control District accomplishes its mission by devising flood damage reduction plans, implementing the plans and maintaining the infrastructure. To learn more about the Flood Control District, visit www.hcfcd.org.



Failing concrete side slopes along the drainage ditch formally identified as W129-00-00 have caused erosion and have affected the integrity of the infrastructure.



The W129-00-00 drainage ditch will be enclosed in dual 12-foot by 10-foot reinforced concrete boxes, as shown in this stretch spanning from Buffalo Bayou to San Felipe Street.